

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-2. Cancelled

3. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

prior to a live, in-person auction,

establishing a starting bid for an item in an online environment by performing a

an interactive pre-auction bidding process in the online environment for a predetermined amount of time, the pre-auction bidding process including

communicating the item to online users,

receiving bids for the item from online bidders, and

choosing as the starting bid a highest bid from the bids received;

communicating the starting bid for the item to the live, in-person auction; and

during the live, in-person auction,

updating bidding information associated with the item in the online environment

to reflect a current bid associated with the item in the live, in-person

auction[[;]],

accepting a bid from an online bidder in the online environment reflecting the

online bidder's maximum proxy price[[;]], and

bidding on behalf of the online bidder against one or more live bidders that are

participating in the live, in-person auction based upon the maximum proxy

price.

4. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

prior to a live, in-person auction, establishing a starting bid for an item for a live

~~portion of an auction in an online environment by performing a-an~~

interactive pre-auction bidding process in an the online environment for a

predetermined amount of time, the pre-auction bidding process including

communicating the item to online users,

receiving bids for the item from online bidders, and

choosing as the starting bid a highest bid from the bids received;

communicating the starting bid for the item to the live, portion of the in-person

auction; and

performing the live, in-person auction.

~~during the live auction portion of the auction;~~

~~updating bidding information associated with the item in the online~~

~~environment to reflect a current bid associated with the item in the~~

~~live portion of the auction;~~

~~accepting a bid from an online bidder in the online environment reflecting~~

~~the online bidder's maximum proxy price; and~~

~~bidding against one or more live bidders that are present at the live auction~~

~~portion of the auction until one of:~~

~~the maximum proxy price has been exceeded; and~~

~~no further live bids are received.~~

5. (Currently Amended) A computer system, comprising:

a storage device having stored therein a one or more routines for integrating an online bidding process with a live, in-person portion of an auction; and
a processor coupled to the storage device, the processor for executing to execute the one or more routines to provide feedback to online bidders in an online environment during the live, portion of the in-person auction and serve as a proxy bidder for the online bidders, where:

prior to the live, in-person auction, a starting bid is established for an item for the live portion of the auction in the online environment by performing an interactive by performing a pre-auction bidding process in the online environment for a predetermined amount of time, the pre-auction bidding process including communicating the item to online users, receiving bids for the item from online bidders, and choosing as the starting bid a highest bid from the bids received[[;]],

communicating the starting bid for the item to the live, in-person auction, during the live, in-person auction, feedback is provided to the online bidders by updating bidding information associated with the item in the online environment to reflect a current bid associated with

the item during the live, ~~portion of the in-person~~ auction[[]], and proxy bidding is accomplished by accepting a bid from one or more of the online bidders reflecting the online bidders' maximum proxy price, and

bidding on behalf of the one or more online bidders against one or more

live bidders participating in the live, ~~portion of the in-person~~ auction ~~based upon the maximum proxy price until the occurrence of one of:~~

~~each of the one or more online bidders' maximum proxy price has been exceeded; and~~

~~no further live bids are received.~~

6. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing ~~sequences sets of instructions, the sequences of instructions which, when executed by a processor machine, cause the processor machine to:~~ prior to a live, in-person auction, establish a starting bid for an item for a live portion of an auction ~~in an online environment by performing a-an interactive pre-auction bidding process in an~~ the online environment for a predetermined amount of time, ~~the pre-auction bidding process including~~ communicating the item to online users, receiving bids for the item from online bidders, and

choosing as the starting bid a highest bid from the bids received;

communicate the starting bid for the item to the live, portion of the in-person

auction; and

during the live, in-person auction portion of the auction[[::]],

update bidding information associated with the item in the online environment to

reflect a current bid associated with the item in the live, in-person portion

of the auction,

accept a bid from an online bidder in the online environment reflecting the online

bidder's maximum proxy price, and

bid on behalf of the online bidder against one or more live bidders that are

participating in the live, in-person auction based upon the maximum proxy

price.

bid against one or more live bidders that are present at the live auction

portion of the auction until one of:

the maximum proxy price has been exceeded; and

no further live bids are received.

7. (New) The method of claim 3, wherein the communicating of the item to the online users comprises providing access to catalog information for items available in the live, in-person auction, to enable the online users to perform one or more of the following: search the catalog information for the item, view the item, and bid on the item during the pre-auction bidding process.

8. (New) The method of claim 3, further comprises providing the online users with an audio webcast of the live, in-person auction.

9. (New) The method of claim 3, further comprises providing the online users with a video webcast of the live, in-person auction.

10. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein the performing of the live, in-person auction further comprises:

updating bidding information associated with the item in the online environment to reflect a current bid associated with the item in the live, in-person auction,

accepting a bid from an online bidder in the online environment reflecting the online bidder's maximum proxy price, and

bidding on behalf of the online bidder against one or more live bidders that are participating in the live, in-person auction based upon the maximum proxy price.

11. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein the communicating of the item to the online users comprises providing access to catalog information for items available in the live, in-person auction, to enable the online users to perform one or more of the following: search the catalog information for the item, view the item, and bid on the item during the pre-auction bidding process.

12. (New) The method of claim 4, further comprises providing the online users with an audio webcast or a video webcast of the live, in-person auction.

13. (New) The system of claim 5, wherein the processor is further to provide access to catalog information for items available in the live, in-person auction, to enable the online users to perform one or more of the following: search the catalog

information for the item, view the item, and bid on the item during the pre-auction bidding process.

14. (New) The system of claim 5, wherein the bidding on behalf of the one or more online bidders comprises bidding the bid price for the item when an amount of the bid price exceeds the current bid for the item.

15. (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 6, wherein the communicating of the item to the online users comprises providing access to catalog information for items available in the live, in-person auction, to enable the online users to perform one or more of the following: search the catalog information for the item, view the item, and bid on the item during the pre-auction bidding process.

16. (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 6, wherein the sets of instructions, which when executed by the machine, further cause the machine to provide the online users with an audio webcast of the live, in-person auction.

17. (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 6, wherein the sets of instructions, which when executed by the machine, further cause the machine to provide the online users with a video webcast of the live, in-person auction.

18. (New) A machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing sets of instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to: prior to a live, in-person auction, establish a starting bid for an item in an online environment by performing an interactive pre-auction bidding process in the online environment for a predetermined amount of time, the pre-auction bidding process including communicating the item to online users,

receiving bids for the item from online bidders, and

choosing as the starting bid a highest bid from the bids received;

communicate the starting bid for the item to the live, in-person auction; and

perform the live, in-person auction.

19. (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 18, wherein the sets of instructions which, when executed by the machine, further cause the machine to:

during the live, in-person auction, update bidding information associated with the item in the online environment to reflect a current bid associated with the item in the live, in-person auction,

accept a bid from an online bidder in the online environment reflecting the online bidder's maximum proxy price, and

bid on behalf of the online bidder against one or more live bidders that are participating in the live, in-person auction based upon the maximum proxy price.

20. (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 18, wherein the communicating of the item to the online users comprises providing access to catalog information for items available in the live, in-person auction, to enable the online users to perform one or more of the following: search the catalog information for the item, view the item, and bid on the item during the pre-auction bidding process.

21. (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 18, wherein the sets of instructions which, when executed by the machine, further cause the machine to provide the online users with an audio webcast or a video webcast of the live, in-person auction.

22. (New) A system, comprising:

a storage medium; and

a processor coupled to the storage medium, the processor to

prior to a live, in-person auction, establish a starting bid for an item in an online environment by performing an interactive pre-auction bidding process in the online environment for a predetermined amount of time, the pre-auction bidding process including

communicating the item to online users,

receiving bids for the item from online bidders, and

choosing as the starting bid a highest bid from the bids received,

communicate the starting bid for the item to the live, in-person auction, and

perform the live, in-person auction.

23. (New) The system of claim 22, wherein the processor is further to:

during the live, in-person auction, updating bidding information associated with the item in the online environment to reflect a current bid associated with the item in the live, in-person auction;

accepting a bid from an online bidder in the online environment reflecting the

online bidder's maximum proxy price; and

bidding on behalf of the online bidder against one or more live bidders that are

participating in the live, in-person auction based upon the maximum proxy price.

24. (New) The system of claim 22, wherein the communicating of the item to the online users comprises providing access to catalog information for items available in the live, in-person auction, to enable the online users to perform one or more of the following: search the catalog information for the item, view the item, and bid on the item during the pre-auction bidding process.
